11:League of Nations G-4 (no date) 1939 RB5 Lithuanians RB5

XII. RURAL PLANNING

491 Before the war, only rudimentary means of communication existed. During the hostilities, transport conditions became even worse : the main roads were broken up and the by-roads suffered serious damage. When Lithuania became independent, all the existing roads had to be rebuilt and new means of communication to be provided. Between 1918 and 1937, over 1,000 kilometres of main roads were repaired and over 200 kilometres built. In 1937, there were 1,950 kilometres of main roads. Adding by-roads of the first category (4,365 kilometres) and of the second category (9,300 kilometres), there is a total of 15,000 kilometres of roads — that is, roughly 270 kilometres per 1,000 square kilometres and 60 kilometres per 10,000 inhabitants. The farmer, in addition to the main roads and the by-roads of the first and second categories, can use the by-roads of the third category, connecting villages and isolated farms, so that he usually has adequate means of communication and can always take his produce to the nearest markets. Motor-bus services (a means of communication which is rapidly spreading) make travelling fairly easy. The Government proposes to build 700 kilometres of main roads in the next ten years and to develop and improve the system of by-roads.

● 621 As regards other questions connected with rural planning, it may be noted that the villages are divided up into separate isolated farms (see II), and that, in four or five years time, built-up villages areas will have ceased to exist. Agriculturists who have left their villages to take up farming on these separate undertakings have to dig wells, but this does not, as a rule, present great difficulties, as drinking-water is found nearly 377 everywhere. Electrification has only just started : at present, regional electric power stations are being set up (the source of energy being peat), and the construction of a large central hydro-electric power station is under consideration. It is possible that the problem of the electrification of the country-side may become a matter of pressing concern in the near future : the drawbacks attaching to the system of scattered and isolated farms will then become apparent.

369 For these isolated farms, the school and church, representing the economic and ideological aspects of organised farming interests, serve as cultural and social centres. Together with the Press and the wireless, they correct such dangers as isolated members of the rural community might otherwise be exposed to from a cultural and social point of view.

1. A land reform program divided former common pasture land into separate farms.